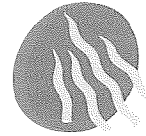




Honourable Neil Roberts MP
Member for Nudgee



Queensland
Government

Minister for Police, Corrective Services
and Emergency Services

Ref: 11346 P2 LT

06 APR 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 11 March 2010 forwarding to me petition number 1394-10 lodged by Mr David Gibson MP, Member for Gympie, and received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 10 March 2010.

The petition seeks an increased police presence in the Gympie Central Business District (CBD) to address incidents of assault on Friday and Saturday nights, including at taxi ranks.

I note petition number 1335-09 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 10 February 2010 also relates to these issues.

On advice from the Queensland Police Service, a review of assaults in the Gympie CBD on Friday and Saturday nights between the hours of 10.00 pm and 4.00 am revealed a slight increase from 2008 to 2009. However, police advise a number of these incidents in 2009 were attributable to one offender, who is currently serving a term of imprisonment for these offences. They advise also that all assault matters which occurred in 2008 and 2009 between the hours of 10.00 pm and 4.00 am on Friday and Saturday nights have been addressed, with the exception of one matter which is still under investigation.

Gympie police have responded to the issues raised by performing public order and liquor operations utilising local, district and regional resources. Police also maintain a highly-visible presence in the CBD and conduct regular foot and vehicular patrols targeting violence.

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Gympie police also launched a Liquor Accord in 2009 to address alcohol-related crime. This initiative involves key stakeholders from within the Gympie community, including police, liquor licensees, liquor licensing officers, and representatives of the Gympie Regional Council, security firms and taxi services. The group proactively seeks local solutions to a wide range of local community safety issues. The banning of patrons from licensed premises for unacceptable behaviour and enhancements to the cab rank located in the CBD have been a focus to date. Improved lighting and the installation of safety hand rails at the cab rank are aimed at encouraging orderly hiring of cabs and improved safety for patrons.

Greater use of the media to educate members of the public on personal safety and related issues and the introduction of video surveillance in the CBD, are also expected to assist in addressing these concerns.

Acting Superintendent Ronald Van Saane, Gympie Police District, recently held discussions with Mr David Gibson MP, Member for Gympie; Councillor Ron Dyne, Mayor of the Gympie Regional Council; and Ms Karyn De Vere, spokesperson for "Bring the Police Beat back to Mary Street" Campaign, in relation to the issues raised.

Regarding police resources generally, the Police Service advises the Gympie Police District, which includes Gympie Police Station, is resourced in accordance with the Police Service's Staffing Allocation Model. The Model is used to determine police staffing allocations across the State. The Model is continually revised and updated on the basis of assessments of relative workloads and police staffing needs of all areas as identified through crime, population and traffic statistics, and various other service delivery factors common to all communities. I am advised the Gympie Police District had an approved staff strength of 153 police officers as at 1 February 2010.

The Gympie Police Station also receives operational support as required from Gympie District specialist services, including the Criminal Investigation Branch, Child Protection and Investigation Unit, Traffic Branch and Scenes of Crime Unit.

On the issue of a Police Beat, the Police Service is satisfied the proximity of the Gympie Police Station to the CBD provides adequate police resources and an effective police presence. Therefore, it is not proposed to re-establish a Police Beat at this time.

The Police Service considers the current level of police resources at the Gympie Police Station to be appropriate. Nevertheless, the petitioners may be assured the staffing allocation for the Station will continue to be regularly reviewed as part of the Police Service's annual planning and budgetary processes to ensure an effective and responsive policing service continues to be provided to the Gympie community.

The Bligh Government is committed to supporting safe communities and ensuring police have the resources they need to fight crime and effectively police to all communities throughout Queensland. The Queensland Police Service's budget for 2009-10 is a record \$1.706 billion - an increase of \$133.9 million or 8.5 percent on the 2008-09 budget.

The 2009-10 budget also provides for the continuation of a key Government commitment to increase police numbers by 203 additional police positions, including 53 specialist traffic positions as part of the Government's road safety package. These extra 203 police positions are the first instalment in this Government's commitment to deliver 600 new police positions over three years. By March 2012, there will be 10 600 police officers in Queensland committed to reducing crime and improving community safety.

Local police managers remain committed to investigating all complaints of criminal and antisocial behaviour and ensuring that appropriate action, including prosecution if applicable, is taken where sufficient evidence exists.

Acting Superintendent Van Saane is available on telephone 5480 1444 for any further assistance required in this matter.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Roberts', written in a cursive style.

Neil Roberts MP
**Minister for Police, Corrective Services
and Emergency Services**